REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reexamination and reconsideration of this Application, withdrawal of the rejection, and formal notification of the allowability of all claims as now presented are earnestly solicited in light of the above amendments and remarks that follow.

Claims 1, 6, and 12-17 are pending in the application. Claims 13 and 15 are presently withdrawn. New claims 16 and 17 are presented in this document. The new claims are directed to a method of axially adjusting a cutting blade of a slitter device and depend from independent claim 1. Support for these claims may be found throughout the specification, such as in the discussion on page 9. In addition, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite that the second cutting blade is rotationally secured to the first sleeve such that the second cutting blade and the first sleeve are configured to rotate together when axially disengaged from the second sleeve. Support for this amendment may also be found throughout the specification, such as in Figure 4 and the accompanying discussion. For example, on page 9, the application recites that the first sleeve and the second cutting blade can rotate together in order to axially adjust position of the second cutting blade after rotating the second sleeve away from engagement with the second cutting blade. In other words, the manner in which the second cutting blade is secured to the first sleeve allows for rotational movement of the second cutting blade and the first sleeve together as a unit even where the second sleeve is no longer engaged to the second cutting blade. The amendment to claim 1 necessitated a corresponding amendment to claim 12 in order to retain consistency between the claims. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been introduced by these amendments.

Claims 1, 6, 11, and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,220,064 to Potter or alternatively obvious over the Potter patent in view of the Barnard and Corse references. Additionally, claim 12 is rejected as obvious over the Potter patent, apparently in view of the Herman reference. Both of these rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Examiner relies upon the Potter reference as disclosing two rotatable shafts, a cutting blade attached to a collar, and first and second sleeves positioned on each side of the cutting

blade. In original claim 11, the Examiner opines that the Potter reference teaches a cutting blade that is rotationally secured to at least one of the first sleeve and the second sleeve. The Examiner appears to believe that the simple fact that the sleeves are mounted against the blades means that the blades are rotationally secured to the sleeves at least during rotation/operation.

In order to expedite the prosecution, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite that the second cutting blade is rotationally secured to the first sleeve such that the second cutting blade and the first sleeve are configured to rotate together when axially disengaged from the second sleeve. This is clearly shown in Figure 4 and described in the accompanying description, where it is noted that the engagement between the first sleeve and the second cutting blade via the pin 27 enables the first sleeve and the cutting blade to rotate as a unit around the collar. This rotation separate from the second sleeve allows the user to rotate the second sleeve away from the cutting blade when it is desired to adjust the axial position of the second cutting blade. Thereafter, the first sleeve with the engaged second cutting blade, which is rotationally secured to the first sleeve, can be rotated in order to move the second cutting blade into the desired position. Thereafter, the second sleeve can be moved back into engagement with the cutting blade and the two sleeves can be counter rotated in order to compress the cutting blade therebetween.

The Potter patent is directed to clamping devices that can be used in connection with a tool mounted on an arbor. The clamping collar is intended to allow quick axial location changes along the arbor, and it also is intended to provide an axial thrust against a tool mounted on the arbor (see column 1, lines 43-46; column 2, lines 1-6). In order to accomplish this, the Potter patent provides two configurations for clamping collar 46 set forth in Figures 7 and 9. In Figure 7, the clamping collar provides axial thrust towards a slitter blade 30 through the use of fluid pressure admitted into a chamber 76 behind an annular piston 74. The annular piston 74 is in frictional contact with the slitter blade 30. See column 5, lines 13-29. In an alternative embodiment shown in Figure 9, the axial thrust is provided by a ring 82, which is in threaded engagement with collar 46, whereby thrust is provided by rotation of the ring toward the slitter blade. See column 5, lines 30-37. Note that in both embodiments, the only engagement between the clamping collar and the slitter blade is through frictional surface contact.

In contrast to the present invention, neither clamping device positioned on either side of a slitter blade in the Potter patent is rotatably secured to the cutting blade such that one clamping device is configured to rotate together with the second cutting blade even where the cutting blade is disengaged from the other clamping device. Specifically, it is noted that all claims of record recite that the second cutting blade is rotationally secured to the first sleeve such that the second cutting blade and the first sleeve are configured to rotate together when axially disengaged from the second sleeve. Since the Potter patent only allows for frictional contact between the clamping devices and the cutting blade, once one clamping device is moved away from the cutting blade, the cutting blade is no longer rotationally secured to either clamping device. In contrast, in the present invention, the second cutting blade is rotationally secured to one of the sleeves, for example via the key described in claim 12, such that even where the other sleeve is rotated away from the second cutting blade, the device retains the ability to rotate the second cutting blade and the first sleeve as a unit. This is simply not described in the Potter patent and, for at least this reason, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of all rejections based on the Potter patent.

In addition, contrary to the Examiner's combination of the Potter and Herman references, one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to modify the Potter device to lock a clamping device to a cutting blade because to do so would vitiate the reason for the structural arrangement described in the Potter patent. The reason the axial thrust mechanism is based on frictional contact in the Potter device is because the axial thrust mechanism is designed for "fine adjustment in lieu of precision shims, washers, spacers, flanges, sleeves, or the like, thereby providing accurate and instant clamping engagement with an arbor tool" (column 5, lines 26-29). In other words, the pressurized fluid thrust mechanism or the threaded axial thrust mechanism allows for clamping of the cutting blade after fine adjustment of its position. Thus, there would be no motivation to modify this axial adjust system by rotationally locking the cutting blade to either clamping device.

Still further, claims 16 and 17 are separately patentable over the cited art. Specifically, it is noted that claims 16 and 17 recite a method of axially adjusting a cutter blade of a slitter device according to claim 1, wherein the second sleeve is rotated away from the second cutting

blade, thereafter the first sleeve and second cutting blade are together rotated to the desired axial position, and finally rotating the second sleeve back into engagement with the second cutting blade.

In contrast, it is apparent that the Potter device is intended to allow for axial adjustment of the position of the cutting blade by disengaging the clamping devices 42 and separately moving the cutting blade to the desired position. The two clamping devices can then be separately and independently moved toward the cutting blade and, for fine adjustments of the relative position of the clamping device and the cutting blade, the user can utilize the axial thrust mechanism shown in either Figure 7 or Figure 9. In other words, once the slitter blade is independently moved to its desired location, the user can adjust the fluid pressure behind annular piston 74 or rotate ring 82 in order to bring the clamping device into frictional contact with the slitter blade. Nothing in the Potter reference suggests rotationally securing one of the clamping devices to the slitter blade so that those two pieces, as a unit, can be rotated around a collar via threaded engagement therewith. For at least this additional reason, dependent claims 16 and 17 are separately patentable over the cited art.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,

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